Discussion of Common Standards 2: Recommendation of Removal of Stipulations for Institutions with Not Met or Met with Concerns

March 2012

Overview of this Report

This item seeks clarification from the Committee on Accreditation about the evidence needed to recommend a removal of stipulations that are related to Common Standards 2 in situations where Common Standard 2 was found to be *Not Met* or *Met with Concerns*.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item and staff recommends the COA discuss the topic and provide direction to staff. Clarification may be included in communication with the field and with reviewers.

Background

Common Standard 2 is arguably the standard that presents the greatest challenge for institutions. Common Standard reads as follows:

> **STANDARD 2: UNIT AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**
>
> The education unit implements an assessment and evaluation system for ongoing program and unit evaluation and improvement. The system collects, analyzes, and utilizes data on candidate and program completer performance and unit operations. Assessment in all programs includes ongoing and comprehensive data collection related to candidate qualifications, proficiencies, and competence, as well as program effectiveness, and is used for improvement purposes.

In the vast majority of the institutions where issues have been identified for Common Standard 2, the issues revolve around the unit assessment system rather than program assessment. The following is a broad summary of common scenarios:

1) There is no indication of any unit assessment system. It has neither been developed nor does the institution understand the concept of unit assessment system. A system must be developed in its entirety.

2) There is evidence of a framework for a unit assessment system, but the unit assessment system is in various stages – early development; is fully developed, but has not yet been implemented; in its first year of implementation with no data available yet nor evidence that it is using data for unit improvement; or has been fully developed, is collecting data, and is beginning to use data for program improvement.

3) A unit assessment system was implemented, but the institution has realized that it is not ideal and has begun to transition to a new unit assessment system.

Over the past couple of years, institutions have addressed the issues related implementation of a unit assessment system, however, staff has engaged in discussions with team leads about the "appropriate" timeframe for bringing a recommendation to remove stipulations related to Common Standard 2. In reality, if Standard 2 has been deemed *Not Met* and an entire system needs to be developed, data collected, and program changes made based on that data, this process could take as long as two to three years to see evidence of data driven decision making.

Staff pose the following questions to COA for discussion:

- How much progress does the COA need to see to remove stipulations?
- Is it sufficient for the institution to have a well-developed unit assessment system plan?
- Does the institution need to have one year of data collected before the team recommends removal of the stipulation?
- Are there other actions that should be considered such as follow up reports or data in the next biennial report that impact the direction given by COA on this topic?

Staff is concerned about ensuring consistency such that each institution is treated equitably and fairly. Clarification about expectations would allow staff to better communicate with institutions and with team leads.

Next Steps
Based on the COA's discussion, staff will prepare an item for the April 2012 COA meeting, if appropriate. Guidance could be developed and shared with appropriate stakeholders and CTC staff.